rior, however, soon succeeded in founding a new dynasty, the Han, under which, with one interruption about the time of Christ, the Empire was ruled from the close of the third century B.C. to the beginning of the third century A.D. While for a time the Han reverted in part to the feudal forms of the Chou, it increasingly governed through a bureaucracy some of whose main principles it derived from the Ch'in. However, instead of Legalism the Han eventually adopted Confucianism as the theory on which to build the state. The Confucianism which prevailed was a syncretism in which the Confucianism of the Chou was the dominant element, but to which Mohism, Taoism, and the Legalists contributed. It was on the basis of the Confucian principle that the realm should be governed by the ablest and the best, regardless of birth, that, after the first few reigns, the Han rulers more and more recruited the members of the bureaucracy. To this end they established schools in which Confucianism was dominant and instituted the beginnings of a system of civil service examinations through which some members of the bureaucracy were chosen. The structure so erected provided machinery by which autocratic Emperors could govern their vast domains without recourse to an hereditary nobility and the consequent threat of decentralizing feudalism. This Confucian state system, greatly elaborated by later dynasties, persisted until in the twentieth century it collapsed under pressure from the Occident.

The other main philosophic schools of the Chou not only left their impress on the dominant school but did not immediately die out as separate entities. Taoism, greatly changed, continued

popular, even and perhaps particularly in court circles[a]. Some Legalist measures of state control of phases of economic life were warmly debated and adopted, and the Mohists did not at once disappear. Yet philosophic speculation became less original and the debates over it less marked. The intellectual ferment of the Chou was passing.

Territorially the Han was characterized by expansion. The Han arms were carried southward into the present Annam, northward into the present Korea, and westward into Central Asia as far as what is now Russian territory. Contacts with foreign peoples multiplied and more or less indirect intercourse was had even with the Roman Empire. Art was profoundly altered, in